



This semi-annual newsletter is published by the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, 14119 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601-4525, Tel: 352-796-9600, FAX: 352-799-7305.



## Comings and Goings

Hi. I am Janet Grabowski (pictured front left), the new Manager at the Brooksville, FL Plant Materials Center (PMC). I reported for work on May 31 after 13+ years at the Jamie L. Whitten PMC in Coffeeville, MS. I hope that I will be able to meet many of you in the near future and that we can work together to promote new plants and ways to use them to improve conditions in Florida and surrounding states. My e-mail address is [janet.grabowski@fl.usda.gov](mailto:janet.grabowski@fl.usda.gov); feel free to either call me at the PMC or e-mail me with your concerns.

We have also had some other personnel changes at the PMC. Our new secretary, Sharon Digges (front right), reported for work on August 22 after Triscia Weakley transferred to the Veteran's Administration in June. Robert Santucci, former Biological Science Technician, left us to join the staff at the San Antonio Service Center last December. We hired a part-time Biological Aid, David Byers (rear), a student at Univ. of South Florida, Tampa, to help take up some of the slack. Mary Anne Gonter and Ed Black are the only surviving PMC staff members and I would be lost without them. Finally, I can also report that we have a new Plant Materials Specialist on staff at the State Office in Gainesville. Her name is Dr. Mary J.

(Mimi) Williams (inset). She previously worked for the Agricultural Research Service and was stationed at the SubTropical Agricultural Research Station, right down the road from us here in Brooksville. If you need to contact her, her phone number is (352) 338-9544 and her e-mail address is [MJ.Williams@fl.usda.gov](mailto:MJ.Williams@fl.usda.gov).

## PMC Provides Training to Student Trainee

Abdul Mohammed, a student at Fort Valley State University in Georgia, was one of the student trainees hired by Florida NRCS this summer. Dan Oliver, District Conservationist in the San Antonio Service Center, thought that Abdul should receive exposure to the work done at the PMC as a part of his training program and arranged for him to work with us during the week of June 27th. Abdul learned about plant identification, propagation, seed germination testing, and greenhouse operations. And, under Mary Anne's watchful eye, he also had a chance to drive our Grasshopper Mower (below).



## Ghost Rider to Be Released

Documentation was recently prepared to release Ghost Rider Germplasm chalky bluestem (*Andropogon capillipes*). The seed source of Ghost Rider resulted from a composite planting of ten accessions of chalky bluestem collected throughout the state of Florida. Seed will be available in 2006.

Chalky bluestem is a native, perennial bunch grass that generally prefers sites with good moisture availability. Ghost Rider is recommended for forage production, critical area stabilization, and riparian zone plantings. It also provides good habitat for wildlife. Ghost Rider is a prolific seed producer, is fairly easy to establish, and has good persistence on suitable sites. For additional information on establishment of Ghost Rider, consult the Florida Native Seed Production Manual at the web sites listed below.



*Harvesting chalky bluestem seed with a flail-vac*

## Emergency Generator to be Installed

Later this fall, the PMC will receive something that we have been preparing to get for the last three years – a 40 kilowatt generator that can power the entire PMC in the case of power outages. The four hurricanes that struck the PMC in 2004 pointed out how urgent the need was to install this generator. We currently have a smaller generator that kicks on to power the seed cooler when the power goes out; however, it is difficult to do much work without the other systems, especially the well that provides our

drinking water. Soon we will be sitting pretty if other hurricanes decide to head our way.

## Slender Woodoats Collection

Later this fall, we will be completing our collections of slender woodoats (*Chasmanthium laxum*). We made trips to collect this species in 2004 and earlier this year, but we still lack collections from counties in the eastern and southern portions of the state as well as some counties closer to the PMC. We are interested in possibly using this plant to provide cool-season forage and also for erosion control and wildlife uses.



*Slender woodoats accessions in the greenhouse*

## 2005 Plant Materials Available

Seed and/or plants of the following species are available from the PMC for distribution to commercial growers:

- ◆ Floral Passion blazing star
- ◆ ‘Miami’, ‘Stewart’, and ‘Wabasso’ switchgrass
- ◆ ‘Flora Sun’ beach sunflower
- ◆ ‘Northpa’ and ‘Southpa’ bitter panicum
- ◆ ‘Sharp’ and ‘Flageo’ marshhay cordgrass
- ◆ ‘Citrus’ maidencane
- ◆ ‘Floragraze’ and ‘Arbrook’ perennial peanut
- ◆ ‘Chapingo’ Mexican teosinte
- ◆ ‘Martin’ and ‘St. Lucie’ eastern gamagrass

These plants were selected to meet conservation needs and are recommended by USDA for planting throughout the Florida PMC service area. Growers should contact Plant Materials Center for additional information at (352) 796-9600.

Look up the Brooksville, FL PMC at <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov> or <http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/flplantmaterials.html>

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